

REMARKS

Applicant thanks the Examiner for the very thorough consideration given the present application.

Claims 2 and 3 are now present in this application. Claim 2 is independent.

Claim 1 has been canceled, and claims 2 and 3 have been amended. No new matter is involved. Reconsideration of this application, as amended, is respectfully requested.

I. Priority Under 35 U.S.C. § 119

The Examiner has not acknowledged Applicant's claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119, and receipt of the certified priority document. Acknowledgment thereof by the Examiner in the next Office Action is respectfully requested.

II. Claim Amendments

Applicant has amended claim 2 in order to place it in better form by changing the form of the verb "comprising" to -- comprises --. Applicant has also deleted the adjective "sharp" in claims 2 and 3.

III. Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claim 1 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent 5,344,424. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

A complete discussion of the Examiner's rejection is set forth in the Office Action, and is not being repeated here.

This rejection is moot in view of the cancellation of claim 1.

IV. Allowable Subject Matter

The Examiner states that claims 2 and 3 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form.

Applicant thanks the Examiner for the early indication of allowable subject matter in this application. Objected-to claim 2 has been rewritten into independent form, with the removal of the adjective "sharp," and should therefore be allowed. Also, claim 3 depends directly from independent claim 2, and is therefore allowable based on its dependence from claim 2, which is believed to be allowable.

V. Additional Cited References

Since the remaining references cited by the Examiner have not been utilized to reject the claims, but have merely been cited to show the state of the art, no comment need be made with respect thereto.

VI. Conclusion

All of the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicant therefore respectfully requests that the Examiner reconsider all presently outstanding rejections and that they be withdrawn. It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action, and as such, the present application is in condition for allowance.

If the Examiner believes, for any reason, that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone Robert J. Webster, Registration No. 46,472, at (703) 205-8076, in the Washington, D.C. area.

Prompt and favorable consideration of this Amendment is respectfully requested.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit

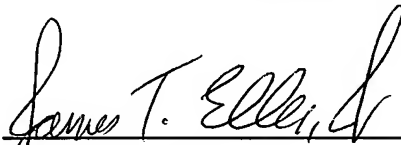
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Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 or 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

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